Principal Crops in India, the Government is preparing estimates of cost of cultivation/production of wheat, paddy, sugarcane and cotton in respect of selected States.

(b) and (c) The average cost of production of wheat, paddy, sugarcane and cotton is given below:

Name of Crop	Cost of Production (Rs./Qtl.)			
	1998-99		2000-2001*	
	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum
Wheat	481.37 (M.P.)	365.77 (Haryana)	580.75 (H.P.)	417.52 (Haryana)
Paddy	594.99@ (Kerala)	337.91@ (U.P.)	705.08 (Kerala)	384.64 (Punjab)
Sugarcane	56.08@ (Haryana)	43.08@ (U.P.)	57.57 (A.P.)	41.74 (Tamil Nadu)
Cotton	2845.02@ (Punjab)	1346.29@ (Rajasthan)	2132.83 (A.P.)	1142.99 (Rajasthan)

@Estimates of 1998-99 not yet released. These estimates pertain to 1997-98.
*Projected.
Source: CACP Reports.

Comprehensive Seed Policy

*373. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring before Parliament a comprehensive seed policy or to overhaul the existing Seeds Act, 1966; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) The Government propose to bring forward a comprehensive seed policy and overhaul the existing Seeds Act, 1966. This is necessitated by far-reaching changes that have taken place in the national economic and agriculture scenario and in the international environment since the enactment of the existing seeds legislation. Moreover special thrust is proposed to be given to production of good quality seed in order to meet the food production targets of the future.

The salient features of the proposed seed policy are given below:—

Varietal Development and Plant Variety Protection

— An effective sui generis system for intellectual property protection will be implemented to stimulate investment in research and development of new plant varieties and to facilitate the growth of the Seed Industry in the country.

Seed production

— Steps will be taken to ensure availability of good quality seed in adequate quantity.

— The 'Seed Village Scheme' will be promoted to facilitate production and timely availability of seed of desired crop/ varieties at the local level. Seed production will be extended to areas, which are outside the traditional seed growing areas.

— Seed Banks will be established for stocking specified quantities of seed of required crop/variety for ensuring timely and adequate supply of seeds to farmers during adverse conditions.

Quality Assurance

— The Seed Act, 2001 will regulate the sale, import and export of seeds and supply of quality seeds to farmers throughout the country.

— National Seed Board (NSB) will be established in place of existing Central Seed Committee (CSC) and Central Seed Certification Board (CSCB). The NSB will have permanent existence with the responsibility of executing and implementing the provisions of the Seeds Act and advising the Government on all matters relating to seed planning and development etc. The Board will function as the apex body in the seed sector.

Seed distribution and marketing

— Private Seed Sector will be encouraged and motivated to restructure and reorient their activities for catering to nontraditional areas.

— Distribution and marketing of seed of any variety for the purpose of sowing and planting will be allowed only if the said variety has been registered by the National Seeds Board. National Seed Board may direct a dealer to sell or distribute seeds in a specified manner if it is considered necessary to the public interest.

Infrastructure facilities

— Seed processing, storage facilities will be augmented.

— Training facilities will be established and a computerized national seed grid will be created.

Transgenic Plant Varieties

— All genetically engineered crops/varieties will be tested for environmental and bio-safety before their commercial release as per the regulations and guidelines of the Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1986.

— The transgenic crops/varieties will be tested to determine their agronomic value for at least two seasons under the All India Coordinated Project Trials of ICAR.

Import of seeds and planting material

— All import of seeds and planting materials, etc. will be allowed freely subject to requirements of the Plants, Fruits and Seeds (Regulation of import into India) Order, 1989 as amended from time to time.

Export of Seeds

— Export of seeds and planting materials will be encouraged through promotional programmes and steps will be taken to improve their quality and competitiveness to meet the required standards.

Promotion of domestic seed industry

— Incentives will be provided to domestic seed industry to encourage and promote its growth to enable it to produce seeds of high yielding varieties and hybrid seeds at a faster pace to meet the challenges of the domestic requirement.

The salient features of the proposed revised Seeds Act are:—

— Establishment of National Seeds Board is proposed in the place of Central Seed Committee and Central Seed Certification Board.

— Seed of any kind or variety for the purpose of sowing or planting will be sold in the country only if the said kind or variety has been registered by the National Seeds Board as per the criteria prescribed.

— The Government will have the right to exclude certain kind or varieties from registration to protect public order or public morality or human, animal and plant life and health or to avoid serious prejudice to the environment.

— National Seeds Board will specify minimum standards on germination, genetic and physical purity with respect to any seed of a registered kind or variety.

— The mark or lable on the seed consignment will indicate that such seed conforms to the minimum standards, as specified.

— For regulating sale of seeds, no person or dealer will be allowed to carry on the business of selling or supplying any seed which is not a registered kind/variety.

— Farmers will be exempted from the requirement to register their kinds or varieties.

— National Seeds Board or the State Government may accredit individuals or organizations to carry out certification, including self-certification on fulfillment of criteria prescribed by the Board.

— All seed processing units will require to be registered and to maintain minimum specifications.

— Import of seed for sale shall be permitted only of registered varieties. Registration of such varieties shall be granted on the basis of trial conducted from minimum period of 3 seasons in India.

— Any person intending to import seed or planting material will declare that such materials is, or is not, as the case may be, of transgenic character.

— Seed or planting material or transgenic nature will have to carry a declaration on their lable to this effect.

Agreement between KVS and EDCIL, Noida

374. SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 597, given in the Rajya Sabha on 24th November, 2000, and state:

(a) whether any written agreement for recruitment of Kendriya Vidyalaya teachers had been entered into between Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and EDCIL Noida, on 21st June, 1999;